

OBA Status Report: Issues Management

Dennis Edell, Chair, Issues Management Committee

We respond to and address issues that affect the health of Ontario's bees and Ontario's beekeeping Industry.



We advocate for bee health and represent the interest of Ontario beekeepers concerning various federal, provincial, intergovernmental policies and regulatory issues that affect the health of bees, beekeeping and the business of beekeeping in Ontario.

Current Issues Affecting Ontario Beekeepers

Ontario

Ontario Neonic reduction

Overwinter loss emergency compensation

Crop insurance products

Small Hive Beetle

Changes to the Bees Act

Thirty Metre Rule

Antibiotics access

Federal

PMRA decisions on Neonic De-registration

Neonic Legislation

With the urging of the OBA, the government of Ontario passed legislation to limit the use of neonic seed treatments on corn and soy.

The target for reduction was 80% However to date, Ontario has only reduced neonic usage by 25%.

Neonic Legislation

Actions taken:

Met with MOECC:

Remind them that problem still exists.

Reviewed tracking protocols and reports for treated seed sales and tracking of substitutions like Lumivia.

Reviewed enforcement of regulation.

Results:

**Ministries are waiting for signals from politicians
OBA will review situation with new Ministers of
Agriculture and Environment.**

Excessive Overwinter Losses

2017's wet weather and poor honey crop and 2018 late spring combined to create record breaking overwinter mortality with many beekeepers losing 50% – to 75% colonies. \$\$ Losses threatens viability of Ontario's beekeeping industry.

Overwinter Losses

Actions Taken:

Met with OMAFRA to review impact of losses and failure of existing support / insurance programs to cover widespread losses.

Results:

A new production cost model has been created that better reflects the true cost of honey production and pollination. This model will be the basis of a new emergency compensation plan.

OMAFRA will submit plan to Minister.

Other production insurance support programs offered by AgriCorp are under-subscribed and in need of review.

OBA will review current programs with OMAFRA with the objective of redesigning these programs to be more attractive to beekeepers.

Small Hive Beetle

Confirmed finds continue to grow especially in U.S. border areas. This year there are 35 yards where SHB has been confirmed - up from 18 last year. SHB has also been found in three yards in NB and one in Quebec. NB finds may be the result of intermingling of NB and Ontario colonies in blueberry fields.

Small Hive Beetle

Actions Taken:

The OBA SHB Working Group continues to work closely with OMAFRA and our PA to monitor and track SHB movement in Ontario

We work with CAPA, blueberry growers and beekeepers in Quebec to establish protocols for movement of Ontario bees to Maritime blueberry fields.

Results

OBA board will be asking OMAFRA to lift the Windsor Essex quarantine

Continuous education for beekeepers on BMPs and biosecurity practices for managing SHB and slowing the spread of SHB in Ontario

Changes to the Bees Act

OMAFRA and OBA are in discussions regarding the future of the Bees Act, e.g. should it remain a separate Act or should bees be part of Animal Health?

As it stands now any changes to the Thirty Metre rule will require approvals per the protocols in the Bees Act

Changes to the Bees Act

Actions Taken

Detailed review of current act and recommendations to bring it up to date

Results

Continue discussions with OMAFRA to better understand the impact to beekeepers of moving under animal health vs. keeping and revising the Bees Act.

Replacing Thirty Metre Rule

*No person shall place hives or leave hives containing bees within **30 metres of a property line** separating the land on which the hives are placed or left from land **occupied as a dwelling or used for a community center, public park or other place of public assembly or recreation.***

Current rule does not provide adequate guidelines for Ontario's growing population of urban beekeepers.

Replacing Thirty Metre Rule

Actions Taken

Conducted a review of set-back regulations in other jurisdictions

Results:

Formulated a draft regulation to replace the old Rule

OBA Board will bring a draft forward for comments from members and circulate a final draft as a guideline for set-backs for urban beekeepers.

Depending on Bees Act decision, this draft will replace the current Thirty Metre rule.

Access to Antibiotics

Per Health Canada:

Tetracycline/Chlortetracycline/Oxytetracycline:

After December 1, 2018, these drugs will only be sold if there is a prescription from a veterinarian.

Access to Antibiotics

Actions Taken

OBA established a working group to work with OVMA and other stakeholders to establish practical protocols for beekeepers' access to antibiotics.

Results (still pending):

- After December 1, the most likely place of purchase will be through a vet clinic and require a VPCR (Veterinarian Patient Client Relationship)
- The Cost will be up to the vet in the range of \$50 annually + the cost of the antibiotic.
- Purchase and VPCR may be set up via phone and the antibiotics mailed to the beekeeper
- Beekeeper supply stores may dispense if they have a vet on site
- OBA will hold AFB workshops for Beekeepers and Vets

Attend Les Eccles and Emily Mills session on Saturday for all the details!

PMRA and Neonicotinoids

PMRA conducted a special reviews of clothianidin and thiamethoxam to evaluate risks to insect pollinators which concluded that risks to honey bees from the continued use of neonics was *acceptable*.

However a subsequent separate review of risks to aquatic invertebrates concluded that the use of all neonics pose undue risks to aquatic invertebrates and should be phased out over a three year period.

PMRA and Neonicotinoids

Actions Taken

Responded to PMRA in March citing scientific evidence and beekeepers' experience to prove risks to bees was *not* acceptable.

Supported decision to phase out neonics due to risk to aquatic invertebrates but urged that PMRA not wait three years but discontinue their use immediately.

Co-signed a letter of support to PMRA along with Enviro groups and a petition signed by 440,000 citizens.

Results

OBA will continue to urge PMRA and federal government not to register any new systemics without first showing they pose little risk to insect pollinators.